

Amendment #12
to the
Fishlake National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (1986)
Designation of Non-Broadcast Communication Sites,
And Finding of No Significant Impact
January 2006

Introduction

Communications sites are one of the special uses recognized in the Fishlake National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP). There are currently seven mountain top locations on the Fishlake National Forest where leases for communications sites have been authorized. The purpose of this document is to designate two new communications sites on the Fishlake National Forest, as required by Forest Service Handbook 2709.11, section 90.

Proposed Action

The Fishlake National Forest is proposing to designate two non-broadcast communications sites. Each proposed site would consist of a land allocation, approximately one acre in size, on which would be located an equipment building(s) and self-supporting communication tower(s) necessary to provide needed communications services to the public. The tower height(s) could vary depending on the location and number of users. (For example: one 180' self-supporting tower could accommodate up to six cellular providers, if a seventh cellular provider required accommodation, an additional self-supporting tower and support/equipment building could be added on the site. In all cases the designated area would not be increased, tower height will be less than 200 feet and towers will be designed to accommodate more than one user.) A typical site layout and tower configuration is represented in Appendix B.

The proposed sites are identified as Cove Fort Summit and Mud Flats. Cove Fort Summit as proposed, would be located in Sevier County, Section 30, Township 25 South, Range 5 West; Mud Flats would be located in Sevier County, Section 8, Township 26 South, Range 5 West, SLBM, as shown on the location map (Appendix A).

Approximately 0.5 miles of new road would be constructed to provide access to the Mud Flats site. Power to both sites could be provided through a drop-down conversion, installing a step-down transformer from an existing powerline near the proposed sites, this would require utilizing approximately .10 acre for the receptacles. Power lines will be installed adjacent to the access road carrying electricity from the transformer to the Mud Flats site. These support activities would require land use of up to one acre of NFS lands bringing the total land use to approximately three acres.

Background

Pursuant to special uses policy, the Forest Service authorizes use of National Forest System lands as communications sites by issuing leases to facility owners or facility managers, who may sublease their facilities to multiple occupants for the operation of communications equipment.

Communications sites are designated for specific type or types of communications uses. Broad categories of communications uses include:

- Broadcast: Television, AM/FM radio, cable television, broadcast translator and low power television and radio;
- Non-Broadcast: Intermittent transmitter use, including mobile radio service (two-way radio or paging), cellular telephone, microwave; or
- Other: Radar, amateur radio, environmental monitoring equipment and aircraft navigation systems.

Decision

An Environmental Assessment (EA) has been completed that documents an analysis of a proposal to formally designate two new communications sites, Cove Fort Summit Communications Site and Mud Flat Communications Site. It is my decision to select the Proposed Action of that EA and: 1. Formally designate an area of up to one acre each for the Cove Fort Summit and Mud Flat Communications Sites as described in the EA and shown on attached maps A-1 and A-2; 2. Correspondingly amend the Fishlake National Forest's Land and Resource Management Plan (1986) to allocate these sites for non-broadcast communications purposes; and 3. Issue a prospectus to interested parties for lease of these two sites that would include installation and management of the communications equipment buildings and towers.

As a result of this decision, the Fishlake National Forest will prepare a Communication Site Management Plan that will specifically identify the shape, bounds and size of these two designated sites and the support area necessary to facilitate the use. The Site Plans will include specific guidelines for the sites in a manner that will be consistent with the applicable management objectives, prescriptions, standards and guidelines of the LRMP (1986). The site plan will also identify guidelines needed to preclude the operation of equipment in a manner that causes radio interference problems.

Following completion of the Site Plans, the Fishlake National Forest will issue a prospectus for lease of the sites. The lease will include provisions to assure the installation, operation and maintenance of the facilities and equipment is conducted in a manner consistent with this decision and with the criteria/standards in the Site Plan.

Public Involvement

Public participation in the environmental analysis of this proposed action was achieved through publication of a notice in the Richfield Reaper. Letters describing the proposed action were sent to all parties on the Fishlake National Forest's list of interested persons, private landowners adjacent to the project area and range permit holders. Two written responses were received as a result of the scoping effort. No issues were identified from these responses.

The Forest analyzed the visual impacts of development of the sites as they will both be in line-of-site of travelers on Interstate 70. The Site Plans that will be developed as a part of the implementation of this decision will include management requirements and mitigation measures

to assure that the use and development of these sites for communications purposes will take place in a manner that will not cause significant environmental impacts to visual resource values.

This decision acknowledges the benefits to the residents of Millard and Sevier Counties, I-70 travelers, emergency service providers and current and future communications users as a result of the continued and expanded communications opportunities that these sites will provide.

I have determined this decision will constitute a non-significant amendment to the Fishlake National Forest's Land and Resource Management Plan. A copy of this Decision Notice, Finding of No Significant Impact and Environmental Assessment will be attached to that Plan for future reference.

Alternatives Considered

The alternatives considered in analyzing the proposed action were: 1. No Action: Not to formally designate the sites and not authorize any use or development of the sites; and 2. The Proposed Action: to consist of the formal designation of one acre each for two non-broadcast communications sites, amending the Fishlake National Forest's Land and Resource Management Plan to allocate for non-broadcast communications purposes, developing two Site Plans pursuant to that designation and approval to authorize issuance of a prospectus for lease of the sites for installation of new non-broadcast communications equipment on both sites.

Finding of No Significant Impact

I have determined that this decision is not a major Federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment, neither individually nor cumulatively. Therefore, an environmental impact statement will not be needed. This determination is based upon the following factors:

1. There are no known unique characteristics of this area. There are no wild and scenic rivers downstream that would be affected by this action. There are no critical ecological areas within the project area or affected by this project.
2. The project area was reviewed for heritage resource values and none were found.
3. The project area was reviewed for threatened, endangered or sensitive species in Biological Evaluations and Biological Assessments. A determination made pursuant to those documents found that the proposed action may affect individuals but would not adversely affect population numbers or viability of a species or their critical habitat.
4. This action will not violate any Federal, State or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.
5. The proposed action will meet the applicable Standards and Guidelines identified in the Fishlake National Forest's Land and Resource Management Plan as Amended and will be consistent with management direction in that plan.

6. Anticipated results of this proposed action are the construction of two new non-broadcast communications sites and support facilities. Future communications uses at these sites will be authorized only when consistent with the Forest Service approved Site Management Plans. The use and management of these sites, when conducted in a manner consistent with site management plans, will not cause significant environmental impacts, even if these sites are developed to their capacity to accommodate communications uses.

Findings Required by Other Laws and Regulations

This decision including the referenced non-significant amendment to the Fishlake National Forest's Land and Resource Management Plan, will be implemented in a manner that is consistent with the management direction, standards and guidelines of that Plan. Specifically it will comply with Management Prescription 6B found on pages IV-109 – IV-113 of the plan.

Appeal and Implementation Date

This decision is subject to appeal pursuant to Forest Service regulations at 36 CFR 215. Appeals must meet content requirements of 36 CFR 215.14. Appeals must be postmarked or received by the Appeal Deciding Officer within 45 days of the publication of this notice in the Richfield Reaper. The Appeal Deciding Officer is the Regional Forester. Appeals must be sent to: Appeal Deciding Officer, Intermountain Region USFS, 324 25th Street, Ogden, Utah 84401; or by fax to 801-625-5277; or by email to: appeals-intermtn-regional-office@fs.fed.us. Emailed appeals must be submitted in rich text (rtf) or Word (doc) and must include the project name in the subject line. Appeals may also be hand delivered to the above address, during regular business hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

For further information about this decision contact Kathy Twitchell, USDA Forest Service, Fishlake National Forest, 115 East 900 North, Richfield, Utah 84701.

If no appeal is received, this decision may be implemented 5 business days following the close of the appeal filing period. If an appeal is received, implementation may not occur until 15 days following the date of disposition of all appeals.

/s/
MARY C. ERICKSON
Forest Supervisor

January 9, 2006
Date

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